

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 03593 041126Z
ACTION SS-25

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-----116665 041131Z /11
P 041104Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8620
INFO AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 03593

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: CGEN PINS UR
SUBJECT: SAKHAROV VISIT TO EMBASSY

REF: 77 MOSCOW 16343

1. EMBOFFS MET AT EMBASSY ON MARCH 3 WITH ANDREI SAKHAROV AND HIS WIFE, ELENA BONNER, AT SAKHAROV'S REQUEST. MEETING LASTED 45 MINUTES. MRS. BONNER ASKED IF THE LETTERS SHE MAILED THROUGH THE EMBASSY IN ROME IN DECEMBER HAD ARRIVED. WHEN EMBOFFS REPLIED NO, SHE ASKED PERMISSION TO SEND LETTERS AND PETITIONS TO HER DAUGHTER, WHO IS RESIDENT OF U.S. (SHE HAD WITH HER 20 OR MORE ENVELOPES OF MATERIAL). AS PER EMBASSY GUIDELINES (REFTEL), EMBOFFS INFORMED HER THAT EMBASSY COULD TRANSMIT DOCUMENTS ONLY TO USG OFFICIALS.

2. IN LONG AND WIDE-RANGING DISCUSSION WITH MRS. BONNER, SHE CLAIMED THAT SHE HAD BEEN TOLD BY A CONGRESSMAN CLINE THAT SHE WOULD BE PERMITTED TO SEND MATERIAL THROUGH POUCH. SHE ALSO CLAIMED EMBOFF AT EMBASSY ROME HAD TAKEN LETTERS FOR TRANSMITTAL TO MOSCOW AND HAD INFORMED HER THAT IT WAS PERMISSIBLE TO USE POUCH.

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3. SAKHAROV AND HIS WIFE REQUESTED THAT EMBASSY ASCERTAIN IF "EXCEPTION" TO REGULATIONS COULD BE MADE IN THEIR CASE. WHEN INFORMED ONCE AGAIN OF GUIDELINES CONTAINED REFTTEL, SAKHAROV REQUESTED EMBOFFS INFORM DEPT OF HIS REQUEST. SAKHAROV STATED THAT, IF DEPT COULD NOT HONOR HIS REQUEST, HE WOULD WRITE NSC ADVISOR BRZEZINSKI AN "OFFICIAL"

LETTER REQUESTING AN EXCEPTION TO USE OF POUCH.

4. COMMENT: AS AMBASSADOR POINTED OUT DURING HIS DISCUSSIONS IN WASHINGTON, REQUESTS SUCH AS SAKHAROV'S FOR TRANSMITTAL OF PERSONAL CORRESPONDENCE TO INDIVIDUALS OUTSIDE USG IS CLEARLY ILLEGAL IN TERMS OF INTERNATIONAL LAW AND CONTRARY TO US REGULATIONS REGARDING USE OF POUCH. WHILE WE SYMPATHIZE WITH SUKHAROV'S PLIGHT AND RECOGNIZE THE POTENTIAL PUBLIC RELATIONS REPERCUSSIONS FROM REFUSING THIS REQUEST, WE FEEL WE HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO DO SO. EMBASSY HAS NEVER KNOWINGLY PERMITTED USE OF POUCH FOR TRANSMITTAL OF MATERIAL OF THIS NATURE, AND TO MAKE AN EXCEPTION FOR SAKHAROV WOULD OPEN A PANDORA'S BOX. IF WE PERMIT SAKHAROV THIS PRIVILEGE, WE COULD HARDLY DENY IT TO PRIVATE U.S. CITIZENS, OR TO LESS PROMINENT DISSIDENTS AND OTHER SOVIET CITIZENS. THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES WOULD IN TIME DOUBTLESS OBTAIN EVIDENCE OF OUR ACTIONS IN THIS REGARD, WHICH COULD AFFECT EMBASSY'S POUCH PRIVILEGES, AND IF SOVIETS COMPLAINED OFFICIALLY WOULD PUT US IN POSITION OF HAVING NO EXPLANATION CONSISTENT WITH INTERNATIONAL LAW AND PRACTICE. FOR THESE REASONS, WE STRONGLY URGE FIRM REFUSAL TO DEVIATE FROM OUR CURRENT POLICY, WHICH IS THAT WE WILL ACCEPT FOR DELIVER MESSAGES ADDRESSED TO USG OFFICIALS (INCLUDING MEMBERS OF CONGRESS), AND FOR THE INFORMATION OF USG SAMIZDAT AND OTHER UNOFFICIAL DOCUMENTS, BUT THAT WE DO NOT ACCEPT FOR TRANSMITTAL PER-CONFIDENTIAL

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SONAL COMMUNICATIONS WITH INDIVIDUALS OUTSIDE THE USG.
TOON

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